

## June 2014 Newsletter

### CIRM June Newsletter

- CIRM Awards \$20 Million to Support Clinical Trials For Spinal Cord Injury and HIV/AIDS
- June is "Meet the New CIRM President" Month : Public Events in SF, LA, and SD
- CIRM Board Approves Funds to Help Recruit Three Stem Cell Experts to California Institutes
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### CIRM Awards \$20 Million to Support Clinical Trials For Spinal Cord Injury and HIV/AIDS Therapies

At its May 29th meeting, the CIRM governing Board approved the funding of a promising treatment for patients with spinal cord injuries and a therapy aimed at helping HIV patients create an AIDS-resistant blood system. Both grants are part of CIRM's Strategic Partnership program, which aims to attract more industry investment in research projects funded by the stem cell agency, and accelerate the most promising projects into clinical trials.

#### Spinal cord injury therapy

Asterias Biotherapeutics is being awarded \$14.3 million to test, in people, the ability of oligodendrocyte progenitor cells or OPCs to stimulate the growth of nerve cells after an injury and to produce myelin, a kind of insulation that conducts electrical signals in the spine. It's hoped that transplanting OPCs to the site of a spinal cord injury could help restore some function to the patient. In a previous Phase 1 safety trial, run by Geron, Inc., five patients were transplanted with the human embryonic stem cell-derived OPCs and showed no adverse effects. In this video Katie Sharify, one of those five patients, describes her experience as a clinical trial participant:

#### HIV therapy

\$5.6 million goes jointly to John Zaia, M.D., of the Beckman Research Institute of the City of Hope, and Sangamo Biosciences. Their research focuses on the CCR5 protein, which is found on cells in the immune system. The AIDS virus hijacks this protein, using it as a way to gain access and infect our cells. They plan to take blood stem cells from HIV infected individuals, then use a technology called a zinc finger nuclease (ZNF), a kind of molecular scissors, to cut out or mutate the CCR5 gene on those cells, making them resistant to HIV. The stem cells will then be reintroduced into the patient with the hope that they will create a new, AIDS-resistant immune system. This video describes the therapeutic strategy and gives a patient perspective:

- Read our press release
- Read our blog

## June is "Meet the New CIRM President" Month: Public Events in SF, LA, and SD



As you probably have heard by now we have a new President here at the stem cell agency. In April, after a nationwide search, our governing Board appointed C. Randal (Randy) Mills, PhD. Now we would like to introduce him to you. One of the most important resources we have at the stem cell agency is you, our supporters, so we want to make sure you have an opportunity to meet our new President, to hear about his goals and hopes for the future of the agency and, of course, to ask him questions.

We are holding three different meetings in three different cities so that as many people as possible will get a chance to talk to him. Those meetings are:

1. **San Francisco: Monday, June 9th from 6 – 7pm** at our offices on 210 King Street, San Francisco, CA 94107. We are located between 3rd and 4th streets, there is good muni bus service to the area and we are just one block from the Caltrain Terminal at 700 4th Street.
2. **Los Angeles: Tuesday, June 10th from 6 – 7pm** at the Eli & Edythe Broad CIRM Center for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at the Keck School of Medicine of USC. The address there is 1425 San Pablo Street, Los Angeles, CA 90033.
3. **San Diego: Tuesday, June 24th from 6 – 7pm** at the Manchester Grand Hyatt, 1 Market Place, San Diego, CA 92101. This is going to be held at the same time as the BIO 2014 conference so we are meeting in the Grand Hyatt, in the Gaslamp rooms A & B

At each event we will provide light refreshments, and parking is available if needed. We do hope you will join us for one of the events. And feel free to share this invitation with anyone you think might be interested. To ensure there are enough seats for everyone, please RSVP to:

Kevin McCormack  
 CIRM Sr. Director Public Communications & Patient Advocate Outreach  
 kmccormack@cirm.ca.gov  
 Office: 415-396-9813  
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## CIRM Board Approves Funds to Help Recruit Three Stem Cell Experts to California Institutes

The Board approved three new recipients of the Research Leadership Award at its May 29th meeting. This grant was created to help

California universities and research institutions recruit the very best stem cell scientists from around the world. This year, the Board has committed over \$16 million in funds to the following researchers:

**Xavier Darzacq** – moving from the Ecole Normale Supérieure in Paris to the University of California at Berkeley. Darzacq's research focuses on the use of stem cells for wound healing.

**John Chute** – moving from Duke University to U.C. Los Angeles. Chute researches blood forming stem cells.

**Todd McDevitt** – moving from Georgia Tech to the J. David Gladstone Institutes in San Francisco. McDevitt focuses on stem cells for tissue engineering.

- [Read our press release](#)

## The Latest Publications on CIRM-funded Research

CIRM grantees are making steady progress on understanding the molecular basis of stem cell biology and moving stem cell-based therapies toward clinical trials. Here are examples of CIRM-funded research that was published in May along with press releases from the grantees' home institution and entries from the CIRM Stem Cell Research Blog:

### May 2nd - *Cell Reports*

- [Stanford Release: Stem cells from some infertile men form germ cells when transplanted into mice, study finds](#)
- [CIRM Blog: Stem Cell Study Uncovers Clues; Potential Solutions to Male Infertility](#)

### May 14th - *Molecular Psychiatry*

- [Salk Institute Release: New stem cell research points to early indicators of schizophrenia](#)
- [CIRM Blog: Stem cell techniques yield new clues to the origins of schizophrenia](#)

### May 15th - *Stem Cell Reports*

- [Scripps Research Institute Release: Stem Cell Therapy Shows Promise for MS in Mouse Model](#)
- [CIRM Blog: New Lease on Legs: Stem Cell Treatment Gives Mice with MS-Like Condition Ability to Walk](#)

## Upcoming CIRM Events

**July 24th:** The CIRM governing Board will hold its next meeting at the Westin SFO in Burlingame, CA. The agenda and details will be posted to the [meetings page](#) 10 days before the event.

## CIRM Funding Opportunities

### Upcoming Applications

| RFA                   | Anticipated Posting Date |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Basic Biology VI      | July 2014                |
| Bridges II            | August 2014              |
| Research Training III | August 2014              |

### Current Applications

**PA 14-04: CIRM Extraordinary Supplement Awards** - Prior to submitting an application, a PI must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing the proposed project. CIRM will evaluate the LOI -- refer to Section V.A. of the PA for evaluation criteria. **This PA is targeted at only the most exceptional proposals: CIRM expects to support only one or two such projects each year.**

**RFA 14-03: CIRM Strategic Partnership IV Awards** - Letter of Intent (LOI) due June 19, 2014 at 5:00pm (PDT). CIRM conducted a webinar for prospective applicants on May 14, 2014 to address questions about the RFA and application process. A recording of the webinar, the presentation slides, and transcripts of the Q&A session are now available.

**RFA 14-02: CIRM Preclinical Development I Awards** - Letter of Intent due June 5, 2014 at 5:00 p.m. (PDT). CIRM conducted a webinar for prospective applicants on May 13, 2014 to address questions about the RFA and application process. A recording of the webinar, the

presentation slides, and transcripts of the Q&A session are now available.

**RFA 13-04: External Innovation Pilot Program** - Prior to submitting an application, a PI must submit a Letter of Intent (LOI) describing the proposed project. CIRM will evaluate the LOI -- refer to Section VIII.A. of the RFA for evaluation criteria. **This RFA is targeted at only the most exceptional proposals: CIRM expects to support only one or two such projects each year.**

**PA 12-08: CIRM Patent Assistance Fund Awards** - Application opportunities on a monthly basis until June 30, 2014

**Eligibility: Only Technology Transfer Officials at current CIRM Grantee institutions are eligible to apply for funds under this program.**

Get more info about CIRM RFAs

Sign up to receive CIRM funding announcements

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